

## NOTES ON ACAR GRAY

BY U. S. GRANT

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In a recent interesting paper<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bartsch discussed briefly some west American species of *Acar*, proposed two new ones and elevated *Acar* to full generic standing. While the taxonomic value which should be given to superspecific group names must, unfortunately, be largely a matter of personal opinion, I regret the modern tendency to elevate most of the group names which have been considered of sectional significance to full generic standing. Perhaps *Acar* should be considered a distinct genus, but would it not be just as well to look upon it as a reticulated subgenus of *Barbatia*, with somewhat different shape and muscle scars? Little seems to be gained in placing too much emphasis on minor subdivisions other than adding to the complexity of an already sufficiently esoteric science. In some cases the phylogenetic history of a group of species or of a combination of shell characters (sometimes brought to light by paleontologic research) will give some basis for judging the taxonomic value of a group name, for if certain distinctive group characters can be discovered to have considerable antiquity then the presumption might be that the group is well established and has had time to thoroughly establish its separate existence. For example *Acila* dates back at least to the Cretaceous and might well be considered a genus distinct from *Nucula* from which it certainly sprung in the Mesozoic. I do not know the geologic range of *Acar*, but if it began in the Miocene, whose faunas are distinctly more modern than and different from those of even the Oligocene, I should be inclined to consider it a subgeneric group.

Bartsch subdivided *Arca gradata* Broderip and Sowerby, *auctororum*, into the typical form (from Mazatlan), *Acar bailyi*, new species (from Balboa, Orange County, California), and *Acar panamensis*, new species (from Panama,

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<sup>1</sup> Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. 80, Article 9, pp. 1-4, pl. 1, 1931.

the Galapagos Islands, and Mantua, Ecuador). The Southern California shell named *A. bailyi* is quite small and appears to be specifically distinct from *gradata* but *A. panamensis* may be only a more coarsely sculptured variety of the Mazatlan species. In all probability *A. panamensis* is the same as "*Byssarca*" *pusilla* Sowerby (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, Part 1, pp. 18-19, 1833), for there seems to be nothing in Sowerby's original description by which to separate it from Bartsch's species, and Carpenter (Cat. Reigen Coll. Mazatlan Moll., p. 142, 1855-57) suggested *pusilla* was very close to *A. gradata*. Furthermore, Carpenter (*id.*, p. 142) stated in his discussion of *gradata* that it varied "considerably in the fineness or coarseness of the cancellated markings" as well as in several other characters, so that it is improbable there are more than two distinct forms of such a variable species worthy of separate names.

The clearing up of old specific confusions is of much value but there are still many old and partially overlooked specific names that need investigation. It is hoped that some conchologist who has a sufficiently large series of shells available will make a careful comparison of the Caribbean *Barbatia domingensis* (Lamarck) which Dall called, apparently erroneously, *Barbatia reticulata*, with the Pacific *Barbatia gradata* and its allies. It is possible that the form called *pusilla* may be identical with the Caribbean Miocene to Recent *B. domingensis* (Lamarck).

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## TWO NEW POLYGYRAS FROM NORTHERN ARKANSAS

BY HARALD REHDER

Mr. Ernest J. Palmer of the Arnold Arboretum, during a botanical expedition, collected at Calico Rock, in northern Arkansas, two forms of *Polygyra* which are apparently new. Calico Rock, a typical river bottom town, in Izard County, is situated on the White River, which meanders through a rather narrow valley. The snails were found along the dol-